



The White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders

FACT SHEET: NATURALIZATION MATTERS TO THE AAPI COMMUNITY

The Obama Administration recognizes that Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) are part of the fabric of hardworking, talented people that enrich the economy, diversity, and cultural landscape of the United States. Generations of immigrants from Asia and the Pacific Islands have helped make America the engine of the global economy and a beacon of hope around the world.

DEMOGRAPHICS

At over [20 million people](#), AAPIs are one of the fastest growing groups in the United States. According to the U.S. Census, the Asian American population grew [46% from 2000 to 2010](#), faster than any other major racial group nationwide. By 2060, the number of AAPIs in the United States is expected to [double to more than 47 million](#). [Nearly 2 in 3 AAPIs](#) are foreign-born and many have had significant interaction with the immigration system.

NATURALIZATION

AAPIs naturalize at among the highest rates of those who choose to become American citizens.

In 2014, individuals from Asian countries made up more than [35% of newly naturalized citizens](#). Those from India, the Philippines, Vietnam, and China ranked among the [top five](#) nationalities to apply for and become U.S. citizens.

Asians make up [nearly 17%](#) of the population that is eligible to apply for naturalization. Asians comprise [over 1.4 million](#) of the estimated 8.8 million residents who are eligible to apply for U.S. citizenship.

In 2014, immigrants from Asia waited a median of [6 years](#) before becoming U.S. citizens. According to the latest estimates, the greatest number of lawful permanent residents eligible to apply to naturalize among Asian immigrants hail from: the [Philippines \(340,000\)](#), [India \(250,000\)](#), [Vietnam \(200,000\)](#), and [China \(310,000\)](#). States with the highest populations of [lawful permanent residents eligible to apply](#) for naturalization include: **California, New York, Texas, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Washington, and Virginia.**

Individuals of Asian descent are the single largest demographic of new immigrants moving to the United States, many of whom may eventually be eligible to become citizens. In 2014, [more than 233,000](#) Asian immigrants became U.S. citizens, comprising more than 35% of the total number of naturalized citizens. [Over the next 20 years, immigrants and their children are expected to account for 85 percent of the net growth in the U.S. labor force.](#)

REFUGEES

The United States has a long tradition of welcoming refugees, including many from Asian countries. The U.S. has welcomed over 3 million refugees since 1975. [Between 2008 and 2013, refugees from Burma and Bhutan](#) constituted the largest numbers arriving from an Asian country. Refugees must apply for

permanent residence one year after admission. Many refugee communities do not realize they are eligible to apply for U.S. citizenship five years from their date of arrival in the United States.

RESOURCES

The Obama Administration supports policies, programs, and services that ensure that AAPIs have equal access to the immigration system and resources to help them thrive in the United States. In particular, the Administration is committed to providing information about the naturalization process.

In September 2015, as part of the efforts of the [White House Task Force on New Americans](#), President Obama launched the “[Stand Stronger” Citizenship Awareness Campaign](#), which aims to encourage eligible immigrants to take an important step in their American journey and commit to citizenship.

To access [U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services’ \(USCIS\)](#) assistance tools for the naturalization process and test, visit USCIS’s [interactive online civics practice test](#) and the [English and Citizenship Preparation class locator](#). For more information about becoming a citizen and to find additional study materials, visit the USCIS [Citizenship Resource Center](#).

To learn what immigrant-serving organizations can do to help raise awareness about citizenship, visit the USCIS [Citizenship Public Education and Awareness Campaign](#) page where immigrant-serving organizations can find print and digital advertisements, online widgets, radio and video public service announcements, and outreach materials in an expanded array of languages targeted at AAPI communities.

To learn how to elevate your voice and help your community, visit the [White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, housed within the Department of Education](#). To learn more about the Initiative’s immigration priorities, or get more engaged in our work, contact WhiteHouseAAPI@ed.gov.